DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 395 525 FL 023 898

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TITLE Gender and Function of Language Use: Quantitative and Qualitative Evidence from Japanese.
PUB DATE 92
NOTE 15p.; For complete volume, see FL 023 890.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Journal Articles (080)
JOURNAL CIT Pragmatics and Language Learning; v3 p117-129 1992

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Discourse Analysis; Foreign Countries; *Japanese; *Language Patterns; Language Research; Language Usage; Linguistic Theory; *Pragmatics; *Sex Differences; Sociocultural Patterns
IDENTIFIERS *Gender (Language); *Politeness

ABSTRACT

A study used both a survey and observation to investigate the phenomenon of politer speech among Japanese women than among Japanese men. The survey of 256 men and 271 women, parents of college students at a college in Tokyo and representing a middle-class population, inquired about the respondents' personal use of polite forms of Japanese. It is noted that in this population, men are most likely to be businessmen and women are more likely to have a traditional role as housewife. Degree of politeness was then calculated for both men and women according to type of addressee (e.g., child, spouse, workplace superior), specific linguistic form, and frequency of interaction with the different types of addressee. Results suggest that what appear to be more polite speech among women is at least in part due to women's more frequent interaction with addressees requiring more polite speech forms. Patterns of politeness are characterized by two behaviors, deference and demeanor, which serve different functions in the interactions. Four features of women's language use (repertoire of personal pronouns, avoidance of vulgar expressions, hypercorrected honorifics, and sentence final particles) were then examined as they represent or are related to deference and demeanor behaviors. (MSE)

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Gender and Function of Language Use: Quantitative and Qualitative Evidence from Japanese

Sachiko Ide

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Pragmatics and Language Learning
Monograph Series, Vol. 3, 1992

Gender and Function of Language Use: Quantitative and Qualitative Evidence from Japanese

Sachiko Ide

INTRODUCTION

One of the general characteristics of gender differences in language use is, as is well known, women's politer speech. In this paper I will first substantiate and argue the reasons for this phenomenon with quantitative and qualitative data in Japanese. In the process of investigating gender differences in politeness in language use I will attempt to show how the same linguistic signs perform duplex functions of politeness: i.e. deference and demeanor.

BACKGROUND

In discussing politeness in language use one is obliged to review what is currently at issue in the field of linguistic politeness. The theories of linguistic politeness proposed in the field of pragmatics in the last fifteen years by Lakoff, Brown and Levinson, and Leech are assumed to have universal application. If any of these theories were applicable to the use of honorifics, the kernel notion of linguistic politeness in Japanese, we could use it as the framework for the explanation of women's politer speech. However, none of those theories in fact agree with the intrinsic use of honorifics for politeness.

Linguistic politeness for Japanese, and perhaps for speakers of other honorific languages, is mainly a matter of conforming to the social conventions for the choice of linguistic forms. Hill et al. (1986:348) call this *wakimae*, ('discernment'). It should be categorized as one of two general strategies of linguistic politeness, the other dealt with by Lakoff and Brown and Levinson being called 'volition'. *Wakimae* is observed according to the speaker's reading of socially agreed-upon relative social distance toward the referent and the addressee, which is performed as linguistic etiquette, while 'volition' is the speaker's strategy to save the faces of the interactants, which is performed according to the speaker's intention. The former is a passive and automatic choice imposed on the speaker by social norms while the latter is the speaker's active and intentional choice.

The linguistic etiquette called *wakimae* can be achieved by keeping proper distance with interactants according to prescribed social norms of behavior. The determining factors of distance between interactants are differences of social status, age, power, familiarity or solidarity, and the formality of occasion and topic (Ide 1982:366-77). In verbal behavior this distance is expressed by the choice of higher/formal linguistic forms. The choice of formal linguistic forms in pronouns, address terms, honorifics and other lexical items according to these interactional and situational factors is essential for achieving the *wakimae* kind of linguistic politeness in Japanese and other honorific languages.

A survey was conducted that focused on this specific type of linguistic politeness, and quantitative data on gender difference of language use were obtained. It is with these quantitative data concerning gender differences of language use that I will discuss duplex variables and duplex indexical functions.

In explaining the nature of these duplex variables and duplex functions involved in women's politer speech, Goffman's idea on rules of conduct will be introduced, i.e. complementary concept of deference and demeanor (Goffman 1968).

The following discussion of the phenomenon of women's politer speech will follow quantitative as well as qualitative approaches: the first based on the survey and the second on observation and introspection.

QUANTITATIVE EVIDENCE

The survey results

The survey was conducted by asking 256 men and 271 women (parents of the students of a college in Tokyo) about their use of polite linguistic forms. The subjects represent the typical middle-class middle-aged population in contemporary Japanese society, the men being mostly businessmen and the women mostly housewives, a situation where sex differences are particularly prominent.

Three questions were asked of the subjects.

Question 1: The subjects' assessment of the politeness level of linguistic forms.[1] The linguistic form in question were variants of 'go' in the context of 'when do you go?'

Question 2: The subjects' assessment of appropriate politeness level due to types of addressee. The types of addressee were such people as the subjects interact with in their every day lives.

Question 3: The choice of linguistic form subjects would use for types of addressees mentioned in Q2.

The data obtained in the form of numbers showing politeness levels and frequencies were analyzed according to gender.

First, let us read Table 1 which shows the degree of politeness level of linguistic forms used for types of addressees. This is the result of Q3. The scores were obtained as follows: for each linguistic form obtained in Q3, we apply the scores of average level of linguistic politeness of individual linguistic form obtained from the results of Q1. Thus, the scores of politeness level of linguistic form used for each type of addressee were obtained. In this table the average politeness levels of the linguistic forms which subjects reported that they would use for each type of addressee are shown according to the gender of the subject responding. When comparing them, we find that for 9 types of addressees out of 12, women would use politer linguistic forms than men. This is numerical evidence to show that women tend to

Table 1. Degree of politeness level of linguistic forms used for different types of addressee (Numbers represent average scores of politeness, 1 being least polite and 5 being most polite.)

Types of addressee	Men	Women
a. Child	1.39	1.15
b. Spouse	1.41	1.85
c. Delivery person	2.19	2.39
d. Friend	2.15	2.55
e. Workplace inferior	1.91	2.39
f. Same status colleague	2.41	2.45
g. Neighbor	3.72	3.25
h. Spouse's friend	3.53	3.99
i. Parent at P.T.A. meeting	3.83	3.50
j. Instructor of hobby group	3.99	4.31
k. Daughter's or son's professor	4.19	4.40
l. Workplace superior	4.31	4.39

use politer linguistic forms is greater than men.

Now, let us seek the reasons for women's politer speech. First, *Women's lower assessment of the politeness level of the linguistic form*. We often hear "He speaks politely, for a man." "She should have talked more politely because she is a woman." The folk linguistics suggests that there is a belief in different norms of politeness for men and women.

Table 2. Degree of politeness level of linguistic forms:

Linguistic forms	Men	Women	Linguistic forms	Men	Women
iku( )	1.23	1.03	*irassyaru* n *desu* ka	4.06	4.20
iku no ( )	1.37	1.13	*irassyai masu* ka ( )	4.49	4.41
irassyaru	2.70	2.64	*o*-ide-*ni*-*nari*-*masu*-ka( )	4.50	4.29
iki *masu* ( )	2.86	2.33	*o*-dekake-*ni*-*nari masu*	4.78	4.64
iku n *desu ka*	2.95	2.53	ka		
iki *masu* ka	3.08	2.78	*o*-dekake-*ni*-*nar*-*are masu*	4.95	4.89
ik-*are*-ru n desu ka	3.94	3.72	ka		
ik-*are masu* ka	3.94	3.51	*o*-dekake de *irassyai masu*	4.98	4.96
irassyaru no ( )	3.34	2.85	ka		

Table 2 is the result of Q 1 showing the average scores for the politeness levels of linguistic forms as assessed by men and women. Comparing the numbers of politeness levels we find that women have a lower assessment of politeness levels for 14 out of 15 linguistic forms. Thus, to express the same level of politeness, a woman has to use a politer linguistic form than a man would. Conversely, if a woman and a man use identical linguistic forms, the women will sound less polite. Where does this difference of politeness level come from? It will be clarified along with the data in Table 4.

The second reason for women's speech being more polite can be found in *their higher assessment of the politeness level appropriate for a particular addressee*.

Table 3. Degree of politeness level of types of addressee.

Types of people	Men	Women
a. Child	1.08	1.06
b. Spouse	1.11	1.37
c. Delivery person	1.89	1.96
d. Friend	2.00	2.12
e. workplace inferior	2.15	3.07
f. Same-status colleague	2.41	2.73
g. Neighbor	3.03	2.54
h. Spouse's friend	3.38	3.44
i. Parent at P.T.A. meeting	3.58	2.84
j. Instructor of hobby group	3.89	3.84
k. Daughter's or son's professor	4.14	4.35
l. Workplace superior	4.66	4.74

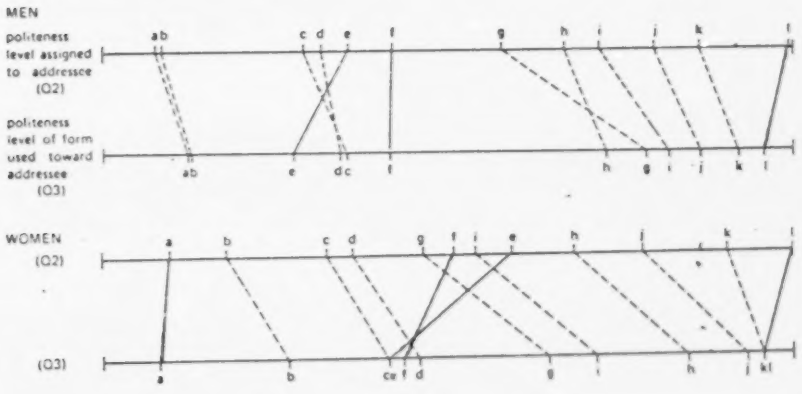
Table 3 is the result of Q2, showing the men's and women's average assessments of politeness levels to be used toward the types of addressee they deal with in their everyday lives. Comparing the differences in numbers, we find that, for 8 types of addressee out of 12, women assign a higher level of politeness than do men. This tells us that the reason that women are perceived to deal with interactants more politely than men do can be ascribed to two factors: (1) women assess individual expressions as being lower on the politeness scale than do men, and must therefore choose an expression higher up in the scale in order to achieve the same politeness effect. And (2) women assign a higher politeness due level to the same interactants: therefore they must go still further up the scale to be perceived as sufficiently polite users of the language.

The third reason for the relative politeness of women's speech is *the greater frequency with which they take part in the kinds of interactional pattern which calls for higher linguistic forms*. This reason for women's politer speech is not as straightforward as the previous two and was revealed in the process of examining a discrepancy between the politeness levels of Q2 and Q3XQ1.

Previous studies of the use of linguistic politeness (Kokurito Kokugo Kenkyuujo 1982, 1983, Ogino 1981, 1983) have not attempted to view the politeness level assigned to the addressees's status separately from the politeness level of language actually used toward the addressee. Therefore, the politeness level used toward the addressee was taken to be identical with the politeness level assigned to the addressee. However, this survey obtained not only politeness levels assigned to the addressee's status (Q2) but also the politeness levels of language actually used toward the addressee (Q3XQ1). This was done based on the working hypothesis that the choice of linguistic forms according to politeness is based on the two autonomous rules of politeness: linguistic and social rules of politeness. As a result we found an unexpected lack of parallelism of the two politeness levels. At this point, we began to wonder about the mechanism for this lack of parallelism. To investigate this

mechanism, we should compare the result of Q2 and Q3XQ1 more closely. We have therefore drawn Figure 1.

Figure 1. Comparison of politeness level associated with addressees and of linguistic forms used toward addressees.



a. Child
b. Spouse
c. Delivery person
d. Friend
e. Workplace inferior
f. Same-status colleague
g. Neighbor
h. Spouse's friend
i. Parent at P.T.A. meeting
j. Instructor of hobby group
k. Daughter's or son's professor
l. Workplace superior

Figure 2. Grouping of types of addressee according to patterns of language use.

Group 1. More polite
- Men and women: b. spouse, c. delivery person, d. friend, g. neighbor, h. spouse's friend, i. parent at P.T.A. meeting, j. instructor of hobby group, k. daughter's or son's professor,
- Men only: a. child

Group 2. Less (or equally) polite
- Men and women: e. workplace inferior, f. same status colleague, l. workplace superior,
- Women only: a. child

The horizontal lines represent scales of politeness, with politeness increasing toward the right. On the upper lines politeness levels assigned to types of addressee are plotted and on the lower lines politeness levels of linguistic forms used for types of addressee are plotted. Since the types of addressees are the same it was useful to combine and compare the two politeness levels to observe the patterns of language use. We group this right-angled pattern of language use as group 1. In this group (indicated by dotted lines) we find the types of addressee in the domain of neighborhood, hobbies and home with whom it is required to be sociable/civil. The rest, i.e. the left-angled or vertical lines show the use of linguistic forms with politeness level equal to or lower than the associated politeness level of the types of addressee. We group this pattern of language use as group 2. In group 2 (indicated by solid lines) we

Table 4. Frequencies of interaction with types of addressee.

Types of addressee	Men	Women
a. Child	13.5	14.5
b. Spouse	9.4	8.1
c. Delivery person	1.6	4.1
d. Friend	7.2	9.2
e. Workplace inferior	11.7	0.6
f. Same-status colleague	7.7	1.1
g. Neighbor	3.4	6.5
h. Spouse's friend	2.6	2.8
i. Parent at P.T.A	0.8	5.4
j. Instructor of hobby group	0.9	5.7
k. Daughter's or son's professor	3.6	9.0
l. Workplace superior	14.0	1.4

find types of people in the domain of the workplace with whom rapport/solidarity are sought.

Figure 2 shows the grouping of the pattern of language use. What strikes one in this grouping is the amazing similarity between men and women. With the exception of language use toward a child, both men and women use language according to the same pattern. How does this difference in the pattern of language use arise? With Figure 1 we may hypothesize on the mechanism of the choice of linguistic forms as follows: when interaction takes place, the speaker first assesses the politeness level associated with the specific type of the addressee. and secondly, he chooses a linguistic form appropriate for the politeness level for the kinds of interaction with the addressee. As is shown in the diagram, the appropriate forms are not chosen to exactly match the assessed politeness level of the addressee. It is the kinds of interaction, i.e. sociable/civil or rapport/solidarity seeking interaction, that decide the second stage politeness level. Thus, the quantitative analysis of the survey results led us to find two levels of variables as controlling factors for the choice of politeness level of linguistic forms: (1) politeness level associated to the addressee (2) kinds of interactional patterns. How does this phenomenon lead to women's politer speech? To discuss this, let us notice the frequencies of interaction in Table 4.

We find higher frequencies of men's interaction with those people in group 1 where rapport/solidarity is required (i.e. workplace inferior, same status colleague and workplace superior. Women in our study have higher frequencies of interaction with people in group 1. In other words, women are more frequently engaged in interaction which calls for linguistic forms higher than the politeness level toward interactants. Therefore, women end up using politer linguistic forms even though the kind of interactional pattern, the second level variable, is the same between men and women. This is another reason why women appear to speak more politely in Japanese.[2]

This result can be accounted as the reason for the difference of degree of polite-

ness level of linguistic forms that we saw in Table 2. Since women are more frequently engaged in interactions which call for higher linguistic forms, they end up using higher linguistic forms frequently. It is a general tendency that the frequent use of some linguistic forms will gradually exhaust their politeness value. Women's lower assessment of politeness level can be considered to be such a case.

Two variables and two functions, i.e., deference and demeanor

We may explain the differences in the functions of two variables, using Goffman's idea concerning rules of conduct which bind the speaker and the addressee together. In his essay "The nature of deference and demeanor" he used these two terms, *deference* and *demeanor*, to label two complimentary behaviors in explaining the rule of conduct which are the kernel elements of politeness.

According to Goffman (Goffman 1968: 56-77), the ceremonial component of concrete behavior has two basic elements: deference and demeanor. Deference is defined as the appreciation a person shows of the recipient through avoidance rituals or presentational rituals. Avoidance rituals refer to forms of deference which lead the actor to keep distance from the recipient. and presentational rituals take forms such as salutations, invitations, compliments and such minor services. Demeanor, on the other hand, is the element of a person's ceremonial behavior typically conveyed through deportment, dress and bearing which serves to express his/her personal quality of desirability. Deference shows the speaker's regard for the recipient, while demeanor involves the speaker's desire to present himself/herself in a way that shows how well-demeaned a person he/she is.

The first stage variable, determined by the distance between the speaker and the type of addressee, is regulated according to the degree of deference. The second stage variable, determined by the speaker's choice of linguistic forms which treat the addressee as higher or lower or equal to the speaker himself/herself, is regulated not according to the regard associated with the addressee, but for the display of the speaker's good demeanor. In the former, the sentiment of regard is directed toward the addressee and in the latter it is directed toward the speaker.

As was mentioned in the previous part of this paper, politeness in Japanese is a matter of using high/formal linguistic forms according to the relative status of type of addressee and situation. For this reason, we may wonder why higher/more formal linguistic forms function as deference and demeanor.

Two interpretations are possible for that deference which a person shows toward a recipient through avoidance or presentational rituals. The more formal the linguistic forms, the more elaborated they are. First, the use of elaborated forms can be assumed to obscure the core part of the meaning of words. Besides this, the etymological function of honorifics is circumlocution one way or other. By obscuring the core meaning of words, we can express things indirectly. Indirect expressions function to be the speaker create distance toward the addressee. Thus, the speaker's deference toward the addressee is expressed by keeping distance, which works as an avoidance ritual. This is in accord with negative politeness in B&L' framework. Second, the use of formal forms requires carefulness and attention more than when

the speaker uses informal or casual forms. The cost to the speaker paid to the addressee by speaking elaborated forms is an expression of second type of deference, because it makes the speaker do the service to the addressee, which functions as representational ritual. This is in accord with positive politeness in B&L framework.

As for demeanor,we may recall the association of formal and correct forms with speakers of higher social class. the subtlety of formal and elaborated forms in verbal and nonverbal behavior creates an atmosphere where paradoxical feeling of distance and empathy is hared by interactants. Formal forms function to maintain distance and at the same time function to create empathy because of the formality shared by interactants. This paradoxically complex feeling is often observed on occasions of ceremony and interactions of people of high or prestigious class that reinforces the use of formal forms as the expression of demeanor.

Let's look at the case of the delivery person in Figure 1 for example. We observe the use of higher linguistic forms than the assessed politeness levels toward delivery person. We see that low levels of politeness are assigned toward delivery persons, but the second level variable calls for linguistic forms higher than those levels. This strategy should be interpreted not as deference expressed toward the addressee but as a display of the speaker's demeanor to express the speaker's identity as a demeaned person.

QUALITATIVE EVIDENCE

Women's politer speech is also characterized by some features of a categorical nature. We will examine four of these features in terms of Goffman's deference and demeanor:

Personal pronouns

Personal pronouns, the avoidance of vulgar expressions, *beautification* (or hypercorrected honorifics), and sentence final particles. The repertoires of personal pronouns of men and women differ as follows:

Speech Level	Men's Speech	Women's Speech
First person		
formal	*watakusi*	*watakusi*
	watasi	*atakusi**
plain	*boku*	*watasi*
		*atasi**
deprecatory	*ore*	*O*
Second person		
formal	*anata*	*anata*
plain	*kimi*	*anata*
	*anta**	*anta**
deprecatory	*omae*	
	kisama	*O*

(* marks variants of a social dialect.)

Two kinds of differences can be noted here. First, a difference in levels of formality can be observed. The level of formality of *watasi* is formal for men but plain for women and that of *anata* is formal for men but plain or formal for women. This

means that women are required to use more formal forms. This reminds us of one of the three reasons for women's politer speech shown in the quantitative data, i.e., women's lower assessment of the politeness levels of individual linguistic forms. As a second kind of difference between the language of women and men, we notice that there are the deprecatory level pronouns of *ore*, *omae* and *kisama*, in men's speech but none in women's speech.

The use of more formal forms functions as the display of a deferent attitude, as mentioned above. The avoidance of the deprecatory level functions as the display of good demeanor. Thus, categorical differences in the repertoire of personal pronouns lead to women's automatic expression of deference and demeanor. This makes women's speech sound politer.

Avoidance of vulgar expressions

Women's speech lacks expressions of profanity/obscenity. The deprecatory suffix *yagaru* (e.g. utai-yagaru 'sing') is used only by men. Sentence final particles, *zo* and *ze* and phonological reduction forms, such as *dekee* (< dekai 'big') having a derogatory connotation, are also men's vocabulary. They have the value of 'covert' prestige'(Trudgill 1975: 102) among male speakers, as these vulgar forms are the display of masculinity because of their uninhibited quality. It is with this positive value that these vulgar expressions are favorably used by men. On the other hand, vulgar expressions are not allowed in women's repertoire of morphemes and lexical items. Therefore, women, having no access to those vulgar expressions automatically sound like persons with better demeanor. We suggest that this display of the desirable quality, demeanor, makes women's speech sound politer.

Beautification/Hypercorrected honorifics

Beside ordinary honorifics, women tend to use honorifics illegitimately; that is, they are used beyond the appropriate level. This practice takes two forms: one is what may be called beautification honorifies, and the other is the hypercorrected use of honorifics.

The honorific prefix ***o-*** is used for goods or actions of referents that are to be treated with deference. But when it is used indiscriminately, for example ***o-biiru*** 'beer' and ***o-yasai*** 'vegetable', it only functions to beautify them: thus, we call such usages *beautification honorifics*. Women's speech is characterized by an abundance of such beautification honorifics.

Honorifics, which are to be used for the addressee and the referent where the expected deference is to be expressed, are sometimes used indiscriminately. For example, we find *Haha ga **o-kaeri-ni** narimasita*. ('My mother returned.' Bold letters mark honorifics.) In this sentence the deference is expressed for the speaker's mother against the rule of use of honorifics in Japanese society, as it is incorrect to use referent honorifics to one's own mother who is one's in-group member. Therefore, this use is considered as a hypercorrect use of honorifics. Women tend to use it in order to achieve a high level of formality of linguistic forms.

Both beautification and hypercorrect honorifics used by women must be intended to be a display of demeanor because of the formal quality of these forms. Thus, women's speech appears to sound polite.

How can we explain this phenomenon of women's display of demeanor? Women, especially housewives, whose activities are mainly in the domain of home and sociable settings, live outside the stratified structure of institutionalized human relationships. In institutions, which are men's society, speakers are expected to make distinctions of status as well as of in-group/out-group. Thus, it is in women's society, where less distinction of status and in-group/out-group is required, that indiscriminate use of hypercorrected honorifics is likely to be observed. Besides, women have no label to mark their social position. High and prestigious linguistic forms are generally associated with high social class. Thus, women tend to be interested in the expression of demeanor, a sentiment of regard toward the speaker herself by the use of higher forms, in order to show a higher social class than that to which they actually belong.[3]

Sentence final particles

There are sentence final particles exclusively used by women. Let us consider how these make women's speech polite. Ide (1982) discusses *wa* and *kasira*, and McGloin (1986) discusses *wa* and *no*. The former argues that they make women's speech polite because of a 'softening' function of these particles, resulting from the tone of uncertainty created by them. The latter argues "By using *wa* and *no*, the speaker -- women -- seek to establish an atmosphere of sharedness. . . . The strategy of creating an empathic atmosphere/space of conversation, which *wa* and *no* certainly contribute, is a very important aspect of women's language in Japanese." (McGloin, 1986)

To make the argument clear, let us focus on *wa* and discuss the seemingly contradictory arguments. Ide's interpretation of *wa* is 'option giving' or 'don't impose' strategy which functions to create distance or *deference*.[4] In Lakoff's framework of rules of politeness, it would fall in the 'rule of optionality' and in Brown/Levinson's framework it would fall into the *don't presume/assume* strategy of negative politeness. McGloin, on the other hand, interprets *wa* as an 'empathy creating strategy,' which functions to shorten distance between interactants by engendering common ground. It is close to Lakoff's 'rule of equality showing camaraderie/rapport' and it is a strategy of 'claiming common ground' of positive politeness, in Brown/Levinson's framework.

How can the sentence particle *wa* be a strategy of both negative and positive politeness?

The solution to these seemingly opposed interpretations of *wa* should be found in the duplex nature of the function of the single non-referential sign *wa*. We may look at it as follows: it is the softening function of the particle *wa* (the effect of negative politeness strategy) that makes it possible to create an atmosphere of relaxation because of its function of non-imposition and respect for the other, which in turn create an atmosphere of the sharedness (the effect of positive politeness strategy). Thus, these opposing strategies can be interpreted as two sides of the same coin.[5]

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conclusion, I shall summarize the features of quantitative and qualitative evidence of women's politer speech in terms of functions of politeness: deference and demeanor.

Features of women's politer speech

Deference (1) Use of higher linguistic forms owing to higher assessment of politeness level toward the addressee (first stage variable)
(2) More formal forms of second person pronouns
(3) Use of sentence final particle *wa*, *no*, and *kasira*

Demeanor (1) Use of linguistic forms of higher politeness level than the associated politeness level of the addressee in the interactional domain of sociable/civil activity (second stage variable)
(2) Women's lower assessment politeness level
(3) More formal forms of first person pronouns
(4) Absence of deprecatory level of first and second person pronouns
(5) Avoidance of vulgar expressions
(6) Beautification/Hypercorrect honorifics

The above discussion and summary should have made it clear that gender differences in language use are the result of the duplex indexing functions of deference and demeanor. It should be emphasized that there is no straightforward correlation between linguistic features and gender per se of the speakers involved, as has been assumed in much of the previous literature on this subject. There has been substantial work which interprets women's language as the language of a powerless class. In this respect we have seen that, as far as we have examined Japanese women's politer speech, the function of demeanor certainly outweighs the function of deference, and demeanor is inevitably associated with the speaker's prestigious status.

*This is a slightly revised version of the paper titled "How and why do women speak more politely in Japanese?" in *Aspects of Japanese Women's Language*. S. Ide and N. McGloin (eds.) Kurosio Publishers 1990.

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NOTES

[1]In Japanese we can easily list a few dozens of variants of a word, say *go*, which show some difference of politeness level.

[2]In Table 2 we have seen women's lower assessment of the politeness level of linguistic forms. We may speculate a cause for this discrepancy in the frequencies of interaction. Women's more frequent engagement with people which call for high linguistic forms (with the exception of workplace superiors) lowered their relative assessment of the politeness level of linguistic forms.

[3]We find a similar phenomenon in the use of phonological variants in urban British English. Trudgill (1975:91) speculates and explains women's preference for high, prestigious phonological variants as the results of (1) women's status consciousness owing to their insecure status and lack of occupation, and (2) women's preference for refinement and sophistication.

[4]Kitagawa (1977) also argues that *wa* with rising intonation is an 'option-giving strategy' like English tag-question.

[5]Full discussion of the interpretation of *wa* should account for the varieties of *wa* used by various speakers in various contexts. We will have to have empirical data of the use of *wa*..

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